

# What is Foster Care?

Thousands of children and families in WA are impacted each year by services provided by the Children's Administration (CA). When serious and/or chronic problems prevent the safety of children in their own homes, Child Protective Services works with law enforcement and the court system to ensure the physical and emotional safety of the child. Safety sometimes means removing children from their homes. At any given time, there are about 9,000 children in foster care. More than 35 percent of these children are cared for by relatives.

## Teaming for Success

Children's Administration, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and school districts are working together to improve educational outcomes for students in foster care. RCW 74.13.560 requires CA regional offices and local districts to negotiate interagency agreements that develop specific strategies addressing school stability.

## Areas Addressed In Agreements

- Transfer of Records
- Academic Planning
- School-Based Recruitment of Foster Parents
- Transportation
- Confidentiality
- Data Sharing

## Who can I contact for more information?

CA Education Program Manager  
**(360) 902-7563**

OSPI Foster Care Liaison,  
Learning and Teaching Support  
**(360) 725-6042**



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# Students in Foster Care

What school staff need to know

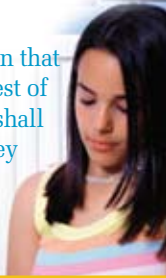


# School Stability

Educational outcomes for students in foster care are significantly lower than those of children not in care. Many factors influence these low outcomes, including the disruption of the educational process due to frequent school moves.

Many children are forced to leave their schools and communities when they enter foster care because there are simply not enough residential resources within the child's school district.

"It is the policy of the state of Washington that whenever practical and in the best interest of the child, children placed in foster care shall remain enrolled in the schools where they were attending at the time they entered foster care." ( RCW 74.13.550)



## How Can Schools Help?

- Work with CA staff to keep the student in the school they were attending when they enter foster care or change placements.
- Create an engaging environment that makes the student feel comfortable, included, and safe.
- Be sensitive to their need for confidentiality. Many foster children hide the fact they are in foster care from their peers.
- Get to know the student's caregiver and social worker.
- Ask the caregiver to include the social worker's name and phone number on the student's emergency card.
- Ensure caregivers and social workers receive report cards, testing results and other important school information.
- Encourage the student to participate in extra-curricular and other school-engaging activities.
- Assist with credit transition for students in high school who are changing schools.

## What Should I Do When Contacted by CA?

When a child enters foster care, CA is required by law to complete a well being screening. Your school will be contacted by a CHET (Child Health and Education Track) specialist who will need your help obtaining the child's school records and completing a Teacher Report Form. This information will be compiled in a report which will be used to plan and provide services for the child.

Social workers and other CA staff may also need your help throughout the school year to gather information on a student's school attendance, performance and behaviors. Your assistance in obtaining this information will help the child's social worker to provide more effective case planning and service delivery.

## School Staff Can Help by:

- Answering any questions the social worker may pose about the student.
- Reporting accurate information regarding the student's performance and behavior.
- Reporting positive experiences you have had with the student.
- Telling the social worker about concerns you may have about the student.
- Asking to be notified of court dates and medical appointments that may take the child out of school or cause emotional upheaval.
- Inviting the caregiver and social workers to attend school conferences, meetings and other school events.

Schools can help children in foster care by creating an environment that makes the student feel comfortable, included and safe.



## Who Are the Adults In a Foster Child's Life?

Foster children have many different adults managing different aspects of their lives. Caregivers and social workers may change several times during a child's stay in foster care. Some of the adults in a foster child's life may include:

<b>Social Worker</b>	<b>Foster Parent</b>
<b>Relative Caregiver</b>	<b>Group Home Case Manager</b>
<b>Court-Appointed Lawyer</b>	<b>Education Advocate</b>
<b>Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)</b>	<b>CA SSI/SSA (Supplemental Security Income) Advocates</b>
<b>Birth Parent(s)</b>	

## What Types of Living Arrangements Might Foster Youth Experience?

<b>Receiving Home Care</b>	<b>Crisis Residential Center</b>
<b>Assessment Center</b>	<b>Therapeutic Foster Care</b>
<b>Family Foster Care</b>	<b>Hospitalization</b>
<b>Licensed Relative Care</b>	<b>Group Care</b>
<b>Unlicensed Relative Care</b>	<b>Pre- adoptive home</b>
<b>Staffed Residential Homes</b>	<b>Return to Parents</b>